

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and DC Department of Health (DOH) share with parents the concern for the future health of young people in our city. Young people can face many health problems, but fortunately many can be treated and cured if they know about them. That's why the Public Schools and Health Department are offering a free sexually transmitted disease (STD) screening program for DCPS high school students. No student has to take the test, it is completely optional.

The Department of Health (DOH) will be at your student's high school during the 2010-2011 school year to offer the free test. If a young person has an STD, DOH will provide free treatment – it can be as simple as one time.

Here's how the program works. The Health Department is testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea – these are serious diseases that often have no symptoms and if not treated can make it hard or even impossible to have children in the future. At the school, the young people will get a presentation on the diseases and how to prevent them. Next, they will get a bag with a cup, go the bathroom and privately decide whether or not to urinate in the cup. The bags are collected and tested later. Within two weeks, the young person calls the Health Department to learn the test result. If the student has chlamydia or gonorrhea, the young person will get free treatment – a single dose of oral antibiotics. The medication utilized for treatment of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea are: Azithromycin (1 g) and Cefixime,(400mg) respectively. Possible side effects include: upset stomach, diarrhea, loss of appetite, headache, nausea, or vomiting and allergic reactions are rare. To decrease the likelihood of these symptoms, a light snack is provided.

DC law is very clear that all test results are strictly confidential and are only given to the student. The Health Department cannot share the results with anyone.

Unfortunately, we have a big problem with STDs in the District of Columbia. For example, our rate of chlamydia is three times the national average. There's another concern that having a sexually transmitted disease makes it easier to get HIV. So, we have to do all we can to get proper health information to our young people. We believe that *all* students can benefit from this program! We encourage you to take a few minutes to speak with your child or children about human sexuality, including prevention and consequences of STDs. You are your child's first and most important teacher!

If you have questions about sexually transmitted diseases please contact the Department of Health at 202-727-9860.

Sincerely,

Diana Bruce

Office of Youth Engagement, Director of Health and Wellness

Parental Opt Out Form

Please complete and sign this form if you do NOT want your child to participate in the program. This form should be returned to your High School Principal as soon as possible. By signing this form you also indicate your understanding that the DC Department of Health cannot be held responsible for any child who participates in the program despite the completion of the parental opt out form.

As the parent/guardian of _____ I do NOT want him/her to participate in the DOH voluntary school screening program at their school. I understand that participation in the program could detect a very serious sexually transmitted disease that is curable with medication and that the test and treatment will be provided free of charge by the DOH. By not participating I understand that I am encouraged to discuss my child's risk of STDs with them and seek medical care as appropriate.

Parent/guardian signature

Date